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Global Agricultural Information Network

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New National Pork Board CEO Makes First Visit to Japan; Cotton USA Award 2015; Niigata City Agricultural Special Zone Visit; ATO Tokyo helps highlight White Sorghum in Recipes; Tokyo Ag High School Exhibits Prized Bonsai at Ambassador's Residence; FAS Tokyo Learns about Urban Farming in Tokyo

General Information:

The Wasabi

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New National Pork Board CEO Makes First Visit to Japan: On May 7, the Office of Agricultural Affairs briefed Chris Hodges, who joined the National Pork Board as CEO in February 2015. Among other things, the OAA discussed the challenges in the Japanese market posed by the West Coast port labor issue, the continued strengthening of the U.S. Dollar against the Yen, and the increased availability of European frozen pork in response to the ongoing Russian ban on most EU pork exports. In spite of these challenges, U.S. pork exports to Japan in 2014 were \$1.932 Billion USD, just below the 2012 record. The Pork Board is responsible for administering the national Pork Checkoff funds that support domestic and international pork promotion efforts; the Pork Board conducts overseas marketing activities through the U.S. Meat Export Federation.



Cotton USA Award 2015: On May 14, the Cotton Council International (CCI) celebrated “Cotton Day” by holding the Cotton USA Award 2015 ceremony at the Westin Tokyo Hotel. In 1995, the CCI established May 10 as “Cotton Day” in Japan and has held an award ceremony since 2004 to help promote cotton’s use by its Japanese customers. Nearly 400 participants from industry and media participated in this year’s event, which included the presentation of the Cotton USA 2015 Award to three famous entertainers who have helped promote the image of cotton in Japan.

Niigata City Agricultural Special Zone Visit: On April May 1, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo’s Senior Agricultural Attaché Elizabeth Autry and Agricultural Specialist Fujibayashi visited Niigata City on the Japan Sea coast. purpose of the visit was to learn about Niigata City’s designation as a National Strategic Special Zone for Agriculture, to see where some deregulation measures been implemented, as well as meet with farmers and local officials to exchange ideas. Site visits included Lawson Niigata (which was established under the deregulation) agricultural corporation that is building a farm restaurant. also visited the Niigata City Agriculture Research Center, which helps farmers to process and commercialize their products, the educational farm Agri Park, hydroponic cultivation of low potassium lettuce by Panasonic, and Niigata Kubota, which exports rice regionally. Since being designated an



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Agricultural Special Zone, Niigata City has already seen additional “Special Zone” effects, such as companies starting new projects in Niigata City without needing to utilize the deregulatory measures.

ATO Tokyo helps highlight White Sorghum in Recipes:

May 14, 2015, the U.S. Grains Council held the “Healthy Zakkoku Grain” Seminar at the Intercontinental Tokyo Hotel. This event was held in conjunction with the hotel’s “May Sorghum Food Fair” and featured how white sorghum could be part of a healthy diet for those suffering from gluten intolerance, as well as highlighting sorghum’s versatility in everyday cooking. U.S. Embassy, Tokyo’s Agricultural Attaché Benjamin Petlock welcomed over 40 industry press representatives, food bloggers, and food industry sorghum users to the event. Erica Angyal, a healthy diet icon popular among young people in Japan, and Chef Isamu Tsukuda, Head Chef at the Intercontinental Tokyo Bay Hotel, also gave a short presentation on the benefits of sorghum and its versatility in cooking. This was then followed by a tasting menu designed by Chef Tsukuda which featured sorghum in a variety of dishes.



On
Bay
from
food



Tokyo Ag High School Exhibits Prized Bonsai at

Ambassador’s Residence: Following on the recent success of the event commemorating the 100th Anniversary of U.S. Dogwoods given to Japan in exchange for Washington, DC’s iconic flowering cherry trees, Tokyo Engei High School deepened its relationship with the U.S. Embassy through bonsai trees. After U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy appreciated the expansive bonsai collection at Engei High School, the Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) helped to arrange for students from the school’s bonsai club to exhibit a series of their remarkable trees at the Ambassador’s

Residence for official events. The students made their first visit to the Residence to maintain and care for the trees on May 8. OAA Attaché Evan Mangino and Ag Assistant Midori Iijima presented the students with gifts of moss (often used in bonsai) harvested from the Embassy compound in gratitude for their generous efforts to share the beauty of bonsai with the Ambassador and her guests.



FAS Tokyo Learns about Urban Farming in Tokyo: On May 21, a FAS Tokyo team visited the Kato Farm in the Nerima Ward of Tokyo to learn how Mr. Hirohisa Kato, a young and innovative farmer, sustainably produces vegetables in an urban area. Mr. Kato promotes sustainable agriculture by performing regular crop rotation, growing organic crops, and by recycling corn stalks into fertilizer after harvesting. Under his guidance, the FAS team learned how to plant sweet potato seedlings and harvest daikon radishes.

Mr. Kato was formerly an engineer in the information technology industry but decided to take over the family farm in 2012 when his father became ill. Mr. Kato grows corn, sweet potatoes, and several different kinds of vegetables on his farm of 0.7 hectares and sells

directly to restaurants and consumers through mail order or at farmers markets. He also provides school children with opportunities to experience farming through activities such as sowing daikon radish seeds and harvesting potatoes.

